



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers September 20, 2006

Latest Traffic Safety News

The National Survey On Drug Use And Health (NSDUH)

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) provides data on alcohol use rates among U.S. employees. The rates of current alcohol use were 63.2 % for full-time employed adults aged 18 or older in 2005, higher than the rate for unemployed adults (56.5 %). However, the pattern was different for heavy alcohol use; the rate of heavy alcohol use was higher for unemployed persons (10.4 %) than for full-time employed persons (8.4 %). There was no significant difference in the rates of binge alcohol use between unemployed adults and adults employed full time. Most binge and heavy alcohol users were employed in 2005. Among 52.6 million adult binge drinkers, 42.1 million (80 %) were employed either full or part time. Among 15.4 million heavy drinkers, 12.5 million (80.8 %) were employed. To download the report, visit

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k5NSDUH/2k5results.htm#3.11>

Updated Sleep Apnea Screening Recommended For Commercial Drivers

New recommendations were released by a joint task force of the American College of Chest Physicians, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the National Sleep Foundation. They provide an updated and consistent approach to the screening and management of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) among commercial motor vehicle (CMV) operators. Sleepiness and inattention contribute to a significant number of CMV crashes each year and OSA has been shown to significantly increase a driver's risk of driving drowsy. A study sponsored by the FMCSA and the American Trucking Associations estimated that nearly one in three commercial truck drivers suffers from mild to severe OSA. The new guidelines are published in a supplemental issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. For more information, visit www.acoem.org, www.chestnet.org, and www.sleepfoundation.org.

Guidelines For Developing Traffic Safety Educational Materials For Spanish-Speaking Audiences

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has released a report that includes guidelines designed to help organizations and others seeking to create culturally and linguistically appropriate traffic safety educational materials for Spanish-speaking people in the United States. The process outlined in the report addresses primarily print materials such as brochures, posters, booklets, and fotonovelas; however, according to the AAA Foundation, the guidelines can also be used to develop videos, public service announcements, and other materials that promote safe driving, riding, walking, and biking. The guidelines cover the process of planning, creating, disseminating, and evaluating educational material. Source: TRB News

U.S. To Require Safety Stickers On New Cars In 2007

Stickers displaying crash ratings must be on vehicles in U.S. showrooms next year, a requirement. The safety displays must be on all vehicles, except pickups, no later than Sept. 1, 2007, which will cover the 2008 model year. They must be prominently displayed and convey the government's five-star ratings that includes data on front and side crash protection and rollover risk. By placing safety ratings directly on new car window stickers consumers will have the ability to make more informed decisions right there on the car sales lot.



What Do Consumers Want?

A JD Power survey examined consumer's interest in emerging automotive technologies. Side-impact airbags ranked highest followed by run-flat tires, stability control, and collision avoidance systems also ranked high. Consumers were less interested in navigation systems, satellite radio, and onboard entertainment systems. For further information, visit <http://www.jdpower.com/>

New Roadway Strategies To Improve Safety

Roadway agencies are dealing with budget crunches but implementing some very creative strategies to make the roadway environment safer combat potentially deadly behaviors such as speeding and tailgating. A number of traffic safety innovations are being imported from abroad. Virginia, Illinois, New York and Texas have painted "optical speed bars" on roads to trick drivers into thinking they're going faster than they actually are. The speed bars are white, parallel lines with a gradually decreasing distance between them. That gives motorists the illusion they're going faster than they are. Washington, Maryland, Minnesota and Pennsylvania have painted white dots on the highway to discourage drivers from tailgating.

California May Require Motorists To Use Hands-Free Devices

Prospects look good for a California bill to prohibit the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. The bill will impose a \$20 fine for the 1st offense, \$50 for a subsequent offense but would not add points to the driving record. California data indicates that 818 distracted driver collisions were related to hand-held cell phone use while only 30 crashes involved hands-free devices. The bill is advancing to Governor Schwarzenegger's office. According to the Governor, "More people get injured or die because of being on the phone, or pressing all those sophisticated buttons in the car...so those are terrible things, and I think we have to do everything we can to stop that."

News from the USDOT

Mary Peters Nominated By President For Transportation Secretary

President Bush nominated Mary Peters, the former administrator of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to be the next U.S. Secretary of Transportation. During her FHWA tenure from 2001 to 2005, Peters was credited with moving the agency toward finding new and more effective methods of investing in highway and bridge projects, primarily through greater private-sector investment. She encouraged the use of new technologies that reduce construction time and expense and result in safer, longer-lasting highways; led a national campaign to improve safety in highway work zones; and worked to streamline the decision-making process for major transportation projects. Peters was director of the Arizona Department of Transportation prior to serving as FHWA Administrator bringing a strong understanding of the needs of states and state priorities.

Stability Control Could Be Required On Cars

Federal officials proposed last week that all vehicles have stability-control systems to reduce the risk of rollovers and other crashes. More than 10,000 lives could be saved each year when the systems, which use brakes and engine power to keep a car from veering out of the driver's control, are on all vehicles, says the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. That would make it the most life-saving safety device since the seat belt. When the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) proposed rule becomes final, it would likely be at least three years before stability control would be on all new vehicles. It is currently available on more than half of new vehicles sold but can cost up to \$900 as a stand-alone option. NHTSA typically lets automakers decide on the technology they use to meet the agency's rules. But studies have been so convincing about stability control's ability to dramatically



reduce crashes that Congress ordered NHTSA to require it. Comments on the proposal will be taken for 60 days, and a final rule will likely be issued early next year.

Ex-NHTSA Administrator Calls For New Standards For Roof Strength, Side Crashes

Dr. Jeffrey Runge, the former head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has urged his former agency to complete a long-delayed rule to improve vehicle roof strength, and finalize side impact standards that could save 1,000 lives annually. Runge said he was dismayed to see a recent NHTSA report showing that the vehicle death rate rose for the first time in 20 years in 2005.

Work-Life

Parents Must Read Manual Before Installing Booster Seats

Experts say 90% or more parents are installing child safety seats incorrectly. With more than 100 child seats on the market, they don't all work the same in every vehicle. NHTSA estimates that 94% of parents think that have correctly installed seats when only 20% actually had. NHTSA says fewer than 20% of children who should be in booster seats use them. The agency estimates that 98% of infants, 89% of toddlers are in the right kind of seat. For further information, visit

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/LATCH/>

International Traffic Safety News

Speeders See Their Flashing License Plates

U.K. speeders are embarrassed by new roadside displays that post a speeding driver's license plates number. Trials have shown that drivers get the 'back-off' message quicker when they see their own license number shown below the speed limit. Radar detects the speed of oncoming cars and flashes the words 'slow down' and the license plate of vehicles exceeding 55mph. In a trial in the Midlands, almost half of drivers breaking the speed limit slowed down.

Distraction Is Major Cause Of U.K. Crashes

Research conducted by the George Institute for International Health and the University of Western Australia indicates that drivers engage in a distracting activity on average of once every six minutes. With one in five car crashes are caused by driver distraction, 72% of drivers will display a lack of concentration, 69% will adjust in-vehicle equipment, 58% are distracted by outside events, objects or people and 40% talk to passengers. The Australian study is published in the journal Injury Prevention.

New TIRF Report Examines Public's Opinion On Traffic Crashes

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) recently released The Road Safety Monitor: Public Awareness and Concern About Road Safety. The new report is based on TIRF's national opinion poll that examines public knowledge about the extent of the problem of road crashes, concern about it as a health and safety issue, support for action to deal with it, and how this relates to driving practices. A prevalent belief is that if public knowledge/awareness were increased, public concern would escalate – resulting in political action that could promote safe driving practices, ultimately leading to fewer road crashes. This new report from TIRF examines data from the poll that bear directly on these assumptions. To download the report visit,

http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com/publications/pub_details.cfm?intPubID=216



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